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United Nations

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean

26 July 2005

General Assembly
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Sixtieth Session
Supplement No. 29 (A/60/29)

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Note

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Chapter I
Introduction

1. By its resolution 58/29, the General Assembly, after taking note of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean,[1] requested the Chairman of the Committee to continue his informal consultations with the members of the Committee and to report through the Committee to the Assembly at its sixtieth session.

2. Pursuant to that resolution, the Committee held its formal session (451st meeting) on 26 July 2005 at United Nations Headquarters. The Chairman also held a number of consultations and meetings during 2005.

3. At the 451st meeting, on 26 July, the following delegations made statements in the general discussion under agenda item 5: Australia, China a[illegible] Indonesia.

4. The Committee is composed of the following States:

(a) Members (43)

Australia
Bangladesh
Bulgaria
Canada
China
Djibouti
Egypt
Ethiopia
Germany
Greece
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Iraq
Italy
Japan
Kenya
Liberia
Madagascar
Malaysia
Maldives
Mauritius
Mozambique
Netherlands
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Panama
Poland
Romania
Russian Federation
Seychelles
Singapore
Somalia
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Thailand
Uganda
United Arab Emirates
United Republic of Tanzania
Yemen
Zambia
Zimbabwe

(b) Observers

Nepal
South Africa
Sweden

5. Following elections to fill vacancies in the Bureau (see sects. II.B and C below), the officers of the Committee were as follows:

Chairman

Prasad Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka)

Vice-Chairmen

Ben Milton (Australia)
Adam M. Tugio (Indonesia)
Filipe Chidumo (Mozambique)

Rapporteur

Modeste Randrianarivony (Madagascar)

Chapter II
Work of the Committee in 2005

A. Agenda

6. At its 451st meeting, on 26 July, the Committee adopted the agenda as contained in document A/AC.159/L.135, which read as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of the Chairman.
3. Election of other officers.
4. Adoption of the agenda.
5. Report of the Chairman of the Committee pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 58/29.
6. Adoption of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.
7. Other matters.

B. Election of the Chairman

7. At its 451st meeting, on 26 July, the Committee elected Prasad Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka) Chairman, by acclamation.

C. Election of Vice-Chairmen

8. At its 451st meeting, on 26 July, the Committee also elected, by acclamation, Adam M. Tugio (Indonesia) and Ben Milton (Australia) Vice-Chairmen. It was decided that Filipe Chidumo (Mozambique) would continue to serve as Vice-Chairman and Modeste Randrianarivony (Madagascar) as Rapporteur.

D. Report of the Chairman of the Committee pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 58/29

9. At its 451st meeting, on 26 July, the Committee considered agenda item 5, "Report of the Chairman of the Committee pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 58/29". The Chairman made the following comprehensive statement on his consultations:

> "The Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean last reported to the Assembly at the fifty-eighth session of the Assembly, in 2003. The Ad Hoc Committee is meeting today in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/29, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace", in which the Assembly requested the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee to continue informal consultations with the members of the Committee and to report through the Committee to the Assembly at its sixtieth session.

"As you are aware, over the years this Committee has not been able to reach agreement on the manner of implementation of the Declaration, despite sustained efforts in this regard. However, in our view the validity of the objectives and the vision of the Declaration remains unchanged. Most importantly, among other measures, the Declaration upheld the need to preserve the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States of the Indian Ocean region and sought to resolve political, economic and social issues affecting the region under conditions of peace and security.

"Since the adoption of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace in 1971, the situation in the world, particularly in the Indian Ocean region, has undergone a major transformation. This includes the end of super-Power rivalry in the region which prevailed in the context of the cold war. Moreover, new security compulsions and new cooperative mechanisms are evolving in the region.

"Today we have in the Indian Ocean region a number of cooperative initiatives aimed at bringing about socio-economic development in the countries of the region, on the basis of economic, technical and scientific cooperation. There are initiatives taken by regional groupings such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation. Some initiatives of regional groupings, such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Asia Cooperative Dialogue, transcend the Indian Ocean region and involve other regions too. Similar cooperative endeavours elsewhere in the world are also helping the process of easing tension and building convivial relations among nations. Nevertheless, new threats, such as terrorism, are now affecting regional stability and security. In the meantime, disarmament and arms control efforts in the region have lagged behind, more or less reflecting the ebb and flow of global trends in this field. In this context, it is clear that there is still ample room to develop measures to realize in general the objectives of the 1971 Declaration.

"In this connection, we need to reckon that the Ad Hoc Committee is the only United Nations body of its kind, having a capacity to address security issues in a broader sense, involving all interrelated aspects. Therefore, in the context of the ongoing United Nations reform process of seeking to promote larger freedom while encompassing security, human rights and development, there is a possibility of exploring a new approach to the scope of the work of the Committee. In such an effort it may even become necessary to consider whether it is appropriate to revise the Declaration on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, in such a manner as to bring the Declaration in line with current realities. The Committee has a unique and diverse membership that could facilitate such an effort, and the possibility still exists for the Committee to be given a new focus and thereby to become useful to the United Nations system and its membership. At its 1993 and 1994 sessions, the Ad Hoc Committee detailed a number of alternative approaches. The reports of the Committee on those years present the wide array of proposals, one of which is that the Ad Hoc Committee function as a forum for littoral and hinterland States, the permanent members of the Security Council and major maritime users to discuss their security interests. Sri Lanka considers that some of these

options could be further explored taking into account current realities and new opportunities. Our discussions could centre on attainable objectives and areas that generate interest among our countries in diverse but interrelated fields so as to have a positive impact on peace and security in the region.

"As for the ongoing work of the Committee, we are aware that the General Assembly has expressed its conviction that the participation of all the permanent members of the Security Council and major maritime users of the Indian Ocean is important and would greatly facilitate the development of mutually beneficial conditions of peace and security in the Indian Ocean region. In this context, and in pursuance of paragraph 2 of resolution 58/29, I have contacted three permanent members of the Security Council, namely, France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, enquiring as to their possible return to the Committee and participation in its work. Regrettably, I have to report to you that those three permanent members of the Security Council have informed me that they have not yet changed their position on non-participation at this juncture.

"Following my consultations with members of the Ad Hoc Committee — I must say, I could not consult all the members — my own assessment is that there appears to be a general sense among those members that the objectives of the 1971 Declaration are relevant and of contemporary significance. There are, nevertheless, a number of complexities and constraints in the way of implementation of the Declaration. Therefore, progress in its implementation remains elusive. In view of the complexities and difficulties involved in the Implementation of the Declaration, it is felt that more time will be needed before we embark on any discussion on practical measures to ensure peace and stability in the Indian Ocean in line with the 1971 Declaration.

"However, there is no provision for having another meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee to discuss further some aspects of our mandate to make the 1971 Declaration useful and relevant to the present. Nevertheless, it is our view that an opportunity exists for the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Committee to conduct informal consultations with a view to proposing at a future date suitable proposals to make this Committee a more useful body of the United Nations, especially in the context of the reform agenda of the United Nations, with a view to contributing to peace and prosperity in the Indian Ocean region in the long term.

"In the circumstances, the Members of the Ad Hoc Committee may consider recommending that the General Assembly allow additional time for consultations on how measures envisaged in the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace could be considered in a more focused manner and allow the Chairman of the Committee more time to continue his consultations."

10. During the meeting, an exchange of views was held on, inter alia, the work of the Committee.

11. The Ad Hoc Committee reaffirmed the conclusions it had reached during its 1994, 1995 and 1996 sessions and emphasized the need to foster consensual, step-by-step approaches, particularly given the propitious international climate, which

was conducive to the pursuit of such endeavours. The Committee reaffirmed its commitment to the realization of the goals of peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region.

12. The Ad Hoc Committee remained convinced that the participation of all permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users in the work of the Committee was important and would assist the progress of a mutually beneficial dialogue aimed at developing conditions of peace, security and stability in the region. To this end, it decided that the Bureau would meet before the 2007 session of the Ad Hoc Committee to examine possible ways to revitalize the work of the Committee.

E. Recommendations

13. The Chairman was requested to continue informal consultations with the members of the Committee and to report through the Committee to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session.

F. Adoption of the report of the Committee

14. At the 451st meeting, on 26 July 2005, the Rapporteur introduced the draft report of the Committee.

15. At the same meeting, the Chairman informed the members of the Committee of his intention to hold informal consultations concerning the text of the draft resolution to be submitted to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.

16. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted its report.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 29* (A/58/29).

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